DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 445 766 JC 000 719

TITLE	A Plan for Distance Education in the Connecticut Community Colleges. [Revised].
INSTITUTION	Connecticut Community Coll. System, Hartford.
PUB DATE	2000-02-14
NOTE	9p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Community Colleges; *Distance Education; *Educational Planning; *Organizational Objectives; Program Development; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	*Connecticut

ABSTRACT

This report presents the distance education plan for Connecticut community colleges. It begins with an overview that discusses the range of instructional technologies, from books to computers to interactive television. The second section of this report looks at distance education in the Connecticut community college system, and describes system organization, mission, and strategic goals; Connecticut community college education technology goals; and the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (CTDLC). Section three of this report looks at responsibilities of the system, of the college, and of the faculty and staff. The final section of this report examines the steps that will follow the approval of this distance education plan. Future priorities include such items as: developing a full distance degree program, perhaps in General Studies, that will be marketed as part of every college's course offerings, system-wide; addressing and resolving the logistics involved in offering such program(s); publishing a matrix of distance learning courses in the 12-college system, so the system-wide degree offerings can be expanded in a proactive rather than reactive way; setting up an incentive for faculty to develop the required distance learning courses (not in the matrix) for additional system-wide degrees; and hiring a Coordinator of Distance and Extended Education. (VWC)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 445 766

Connecticut
Community
Colleges

Education That Works For a Lifetime

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

A PLAN FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

IN THE CONNECTICUT COMMUNITY COLLEGES

1/14/00, revised 2/14/00

R. A. Williams

1. Overview

Definition of Instructional Technologies

Instructional technologies augment the delivery of instruction to serve a range of student learning styles. It should be understood from the outset that technology is only as effective as the faculty member who employs it, and no technology can replace the teacher in the learning process. The traditional lecture, which recent research suggests might be the least effective means of instructional delivery, typically benefits from the addition of student interaction in recognition that as students participate in the learning process, they are better able to retain the elements of what they learn. Technologies can help facilitate that interaction. For example, many lecturers make use of chalkboards, or more recently, "smart" classrooms that can capture lecture notes for later distribution to students. Faculty members have also incorporated photographs and video as a means to furthering student engagement in the learning process. Increasingly, faculty members have web pages to supplement their courses with up-to-date research material, or simply to add another dimension for discussion among faculty and students.

One of the early instructional technologies was the textbook, which extended the reach of the teacher. Upon the invention of the printing press, tutors worried that students would pursue learning on their own, much to the detriment of the learning process. Books represented an early divide between teacher and learner, separating the two from what previously had been direct interaction. Correspondence courses, only possible after the development of the textbook, represented one of the earliest mechanisms for distance education. Audio-visual equipment, computers, CD-ROMs, the Internet, and other technologies have extended the reach of distance learning.

As one of the newest instructional technologies, distance education provides access to education for students who might not otherwise pursue courses because of time or place constraints, or physical disabilities that make attendance on campus impossible. By taking courses on-line or through live, interactive television or CD-ROM, students can participate in the educational process from a distance. Distance technologies allow for the delivery of education to non-traditional, off-campus students in their workplaces or homes and to individuals with disabilities that prevent them

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

from travelling to campus. Specialized training and retraining programs for business and industry can be provided directly to the office desktop or to interactive television locations across the state. Business services and community services can provide professional licensing/certification courses and adult education/enrichment programs for life-long learners. Advanced Placement courses for high school students can be provided through interactive video directly to the high school.

At the same time, instructional technologies allow specialized resources to be shared across the system by capturing unique faculty experts and special lecturers on video as a way to augment lectures/courses. Instructional technologies allow the download of information from multiple sources into a multimedia presentation in the classroom, either online or on campus. The technology can also be used to teach low enrollment courses at multiple campuses using two-way video. Students can conduct library/text searches online and request assistance via e-mail with timely responses from faculty. Interaction among students and between students and faculty utilizing bulletin board or conferencing software promotes interaction among busy commuter students.

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges and the Connecticut Board of Governors for Higher Education define distance education as a formal process in which 50% or more of the instruction occurs when student and instructor are not in the same location. Separate program approval is required.

2. Distance Education in the Connecticut Community College System

SYSTEM ORGANIZATION

The following chart displays college - system relationships:

Board of Trustees

Community-Technical Colleges

Chancellor

Twelve Community College Presidents

SYSTEM MISSION

Distance education should serve to further the system mission. The legislative mandate for the community colleges, as provided in Public Act 92-126, includes the following:

1. Provide programs of occupational, vocational, technical and technological and career

education designed to provide training for immediate employment, job retraining or upgrading of skills to meet individuals, community and state manpower needs;

2. Provide programs of general study including, but not limited to, remediation, general and adult education and continuing education designed to meet individual student goals;

3. Provide programs of study for college transfer representing the first two years of baccalaureate education;

4. Provide community service programs;

5. Provide student support services including, but not limited to, admissions, counseling, testing, placement, individualized instruction and efforts to serve students with special needs.

SYSTEM STRATEGIC GOALS

The system strategic goals -- still in DRAFT form -- include the following:

1. To assure students a quality education by means of academic models that foster student success.

2. To provide workforce-focused education and training in response to employment needs and the state's interest in business development and technology transfer.

3. To define and communicate the college and system missions of fulfilling the needs of the state and its people, and to enhance the visibility and public perception of the community colleges.

4. To foster student success, optimum efficiency in operations, and effectiveness in service delivery by providing appropriate and adequate resources, funding, and facilities.

5. To enhance capacity and use of information technology to support teaching, learning, and student support at both the college and system levels.

6. To enhance the management of human resources and labor relations within the system.

CT COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY GOALS

1. To encourage academic excellence through high quality instruction and services by effectively applying available resources of faculty, personnel, and technology.

2. To extend access to students who might not otherwise pursue higher education or training opportunities.

3. To stimulate a new arena for innovation.

4. To extend the capabilities of the colleges to offer a range of courses.

5. To improve the learning process through new instructional and training modes.

6. To broaden connections beyond current clienteles to new constituencies.

7. To strengthen the commitment to partnerships with public schools, senior institutions, business, industry, government, and the military.

8. To achieve the connected goals of efficiency and effectiveness.

9. To provide an expanded means to address the development of the workforce, including those those within corporate learning communities.

CTDLC PARTNERSHIP

The Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (CTDLC) provides a special opportunity for all colleges in the Connecticut Community College System to participate in distance delivery of on-line courses. With course-development incentive grants, full training in the design and delivery of on-line courses, and technical support, the CTDLC offers quality as well as cost-effectiveness and efficiency. Colleges can use the Consortium web server as the mechanism for course delivery, or, where available, use local college resources for course development and delivery, with a link on the CTDLC web site. Building upon a rich background of expertise in the elements of effective distance delivery of instruction, the CTDLC staff assist college faculty and staff with development of on-line courses that enhance learning for students who respond well in an asynchronous environment. The Consortium provides a mechanism for colleges to respond creatively, not reactively to distance learning initiatives.

As members of the CTDLC, the colleges can also collaborate with other consortium colleges and universities in program design, thereby extending the capacity of any single institution to put a program in place. This collaboration also fosters program articulation so that students can continue beyond the associate's degree to pursue the baccalaureate through distance delivery.

The CTDLC also provides national marketing of courses and programs, as well as garnering state resources that have permitted a wider range of marketing services. In addition to marketing courses developed with Consortium stipends, the CTDLC also markets locally developed distance courses, as well as technology-mediated instruction such as courses supplemented with CD-ROM or electronic chat rooms.

Finally, the Consortium provides student support services, including a full array of library services, a help desk available at all hours, and a sample course for students to test the appropriateness of on-line instruction for them. In addition, student evaluation of courses and assessment of evaluation results provide colleges with valuable feedback on the strengths of an individual course and areas for improvement. Consortium colleges are asked to provide a counselor to advise students on local college policies and requirements.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

SYSTEM RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chancellor's Office has responsibility for overall coordination of the system distance education initiative. In this capacity, the Chancellor's Office should know what is happening at the various sites in the system and should play an enabling role, bringing interesting individuals together so

that they can learn from one another, share resources, and solve problems. More specifically, Chancellor's Office staff will

- Keep records of course and program development on a college-by-college basis.
- Take responsibility for program approval by the Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors.
- Collect data on distance education enrollments, student retention and success, student demographics, and other pertinent information.
- Provide technical support for equipment purchased at the system level.
- Maintain a partnership with the CT Distance Learning Consortium so that interests of the CT Community College System are represented in the Consortium.
- Develop a system committee of faculty and staff to represent and respond to college distance education needs, concerns, and future initiatives.
- Develop and integrate BANNER modules to support distance education initiatives (e.g., Web for Student and CAPP).
- Test and implement equipment that might enhance system delivery of distance education.

COLLEGE-LEVEL RESPONSIBILITIES

Individual colleges that choose to participate in distance education course and program development will take responsibility for

- Developing course and/or program materials.
- Maintenance of course and program quality.
- Securing course and/or program approval at the college level, as necessary.
- Providing technical support for local equipment.
- Providing faculty training and development.
- Identifying college resources to support distance education.
- Facilitation of student contact with libraries and learning resources.
- Provision of student support service information available at the college.
- Assessment of the course and the technology.
- Providing direction for all aspects of instructional delivery, recruitment, and admission of students into the program.
- Answering inquiries regarding the program.

- Registering and processing payment for distance courses.
- Entering into cooperative agreements with outside agencies for training opportunities.
- Publication and updating of materials.
- Collaborating with other colleges in the system.

Collaborating colleges that send and receive distance courses, for example via compressed video, have the following responsibilities:

- Provision of logistical support in terms of assistance to students: developing/receiving handouts, tests, etc. and delivering these materials to the classroom.
- Mailing completed forms to the other college(s) in the collaboration.
- In emergency situations, duplicating materials for students or notifying them of special arrangements.
- Selling textbooks through the bookstore and on-line for out-of-state students.
- Provision of necessary space, equipment, and technical support for sending/ receiving compressed video transmissions.
- Provision of student access to computer resources for the use of application software, Internet, and e-mail, comparable to that provided to students at the collaborating colleges.
- Preparation/distribution of program information.
- Facilitation of student contact with libraries and learning resources.
- Provision of student support service information available at the college.
- Assessment of the course and the technology.
- Referral of inquiries to an address or number provided by collaborating colleges
- Publication and updating of materials.
- Development of reciprocal relationships with other colleges.

FACULTY AND STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Faculty and staff who develop distance education courses and programs have the following responsibilities:

- Determination of the need for the course.
- Identification of the projected student enrollment.
- Maintenance of course and program quality.

- Attention to course design for distance delivery.
- Proficiency with the media to be used for course development and delivery.
- Taking advantage of training opportunities.
- Conducting research in the delivery method.
- Identification of learner objectives in relation to class content.
- Identification of student outcomes.
- Provision of opportunities for student interaction with each other and with the professor.
- Provision of opportunities for students to interact with course content.
- Responsiveness to student phone and e-mail messages in a timely manner.
- Provision of timely feedback to students about their progress.
- Facilitation of student contact with libraries and learning resources.
- Provision of student support service information available at the college.
- Assessment of the course and the technology.
- Clearly informing students about technical requirements.
- Identification in the course syllabus of how students will receive support services.
- Identification in the course syllabus of how students can access the student handbook on-line. [NOTE: a system link for system policies should be developed.]
- Provision of course policies, procedures, and schedule of activities to students.
- Publication and updating of materials.

4. NEXT STEPS

Upon approval of this Distance Education plan, the system should devote its energies to the following priorities:

- Developing a full distance degree program, perhaps in General Studies, that will be marketed as part of every college's course offerings, system-wide. The courses needed for such a degree probably already exist within the system. In fact, with faculty cooperation, there are probably one or two specialized degree programs that could be designed using existing computer related courses from within the system.
- Addressing and resolving the logistics involved in offering such program(s). This will likely

involve long-term and ongoing articulation and cooperation among the colleges. One suggestion that resolves funding and FTE issues is to have revenue and FTE for each course go to the college that offers the course. The college with a specialized core would offer the degree and take responsibility for activities such as degree audit.

- Publishing a matrix of DL courses (similar to the CTDLC) in the 12 college system, so the system-wide degree offerings can be expanded in a proactive rather than reactive way by developing those required DL courses not in the matrix.

- Setting up an incentive for faculty to develop the required DL courses (not in the matrix) for additional system-wide degrees.

- Hiring a Coordinator of Distance and Extended Education.